

PARENTS ARE BLAMED, BUT NEVER TRAINED

An insight I began sharing years ago during parent education classes is this: Parents are blamed, but never trained. Parents are often blamed for the mistakes of their children, but very few parents ever receive formal training for the most important role of their lives—helping their children to become responsible, confident adults.

Even sadder, many parents do not realize the need for formal training to enable them to become effective parents. Most parents either do exactly what their parents did, or the complete opposite because they hated what was done to them so much. Parents need to gain parenting strategies or tools that have proven to be effective and positive.

CHANGES IN CULTURE

Many parents today feel overwhelmed by popular culture and more helpless than their parents. Being a successful parent is much more demanding than it was 20 or 30 years ago. The reasons for this are many: through many hours of television viewing, magazines and newspapers, kids are exposed to a violent society with weakening sexual morals; drugs and alcohol are more available today; the divorce rate is higher; more mothers are working outside the home; and society is more mobile, resulting in less support from an

extended family

Children used to look at ministers, teachers, neighbors, and heroes as leaders. Now they look to cartoon super heroes, rap groups, and celebrities pushing sneakers as their role models. It's what makes child raising harder. It's not just that parents have less time to spend with their kids, it's that they have to spend more of that time doing battle with their own culture!

SKILLS AND TOOLS

Most parents look upon the teenage years with a tremendous amount of fear and anxiety, anticipating rebellion. Successful parenting is not a matter of luck; it requires skills and tools, and those can be learned. A key time for parents to begin to refine their parenting strategies is the time immediately preceding the teenage years. Your task as a parent will be much easier and you will feel more confident in your role as you acquire new tools and strategies.

When adults have trouble fixing

a car or remodeling a home, they will readily consider upgrading their tools. However, when dealing with preteens, it's easier to blame the kids when things go awry, rather than to look at our own parenting skills.

This is the first in a series of articles offering many helpful and practical strategies to equip you to deal with your kids now and through the teenage years. You will also learn about hidden factors that may interfere with your ability to apply the parenting tools consistently and effectively.



A CHALLENGE TO YOU:

1. What did your parents do that you liked? What did they do that you did not like?
2. What is your attitude about the need for parents to receive training to be effective parents?
3. What can you do to show your openness to new ideas that will make life easier for you and your kids?